

# Environmental Health Specialist/Sanitarian Registration Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

DATE: March 8, 2023

MINUTES PREPARED BY: Tracie Zerwas

LOCATION: Teams videoconference

## Council Members Present

- Lynn Moore, R.S., City of Bloomington, City Member – Chair
- Duane Hudson, R.S., Hennepin County, County Member
- Nikki Coler, Public Member
- Neile Reider, Industry
- Raymond Starin, R.S., MDA, State Member
- Peggy Spadafore, R.S., MDH, State Member

## Council Member Absent

- Vacant, Public Member

## MDH Staff Members Present

- Tracie Zerwas, State Program Admin. Tech Specialist
- Jim Topie, R.S., Sanitarian Registration Program Coordinator

## Guests

- Linda Prail, MDH, Food, Pools, and Lodging Services Section Rules Coordinator
- Nick Anderson, MDH Legal Unit
- Josh Skaar, MDH Legal Unit
- Nancy Lo, MDH, Food, Pools, and Lodging Services Section
- Angie Wheeler, MDH, Manager, Food, Pools, and Lodging Services Section
- Avery Guetin, MDH, Well Management Section
- Kelly, Medelin, MDH, Well Management Section

## Welcome to Guests Attending

- Jim welcomed Nancy Lo, Kelly Medelin, and Avery Guetin for attending today's meeting. Jim explained to the Council that these MDH employees would be attending today for training purposes and observation purposes only.
- Jim then welcomed Angie Wheeler, Josh Skaar and Linda Prail for attending today's meeting.

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**Call to Order**

Lynn Moore

- Lynn called the meeting to order.

**Approval of the Agenda**

Lynn Moore

- A motion was made to approve the day's agenda.

Motion: Duane Hudson

Seconded: Neile Reider

MSC

**Approval of Minutes of December 8, 2022**

Lynn Moore

- A motion was made to approve the minutes of December 8, 2022.

Motion: Duane Hudson

Seconded: Neile Reider

MSC

**MDH Updates**

- Jim introduced Peggy Spadafore to the Council. Peggy will serve as the state member. Her term began on January 7, 2023 and will end on January 6, 2027.
- Jim then announced the reappointments of Lynn Moore and Duane Hudson. Both terms began on January 7, 2023 and will end on January 6, 2027.
- All members of the Council then recited the Oath of Office together. Jim asked that Peggy, Lynn, and Duane signed the Oath of Office form and return the forms to him to forward onto the Secretary of States Office.
- Jim then informed the Council that the Secretary of States Office has provided councils and committees with a guide on how to run meetings and asked the Council to review this guide on the Secretary of States website if they were interested.

**Review of Candidate(s) Information**

**Benjamin P. Kubes**

Benjamin P. Kubes has a B.S. degree in Environmental Science from Minnesota State University-Mankato and meets the one-year of supervised employment. Benjamin is approved to take the examination. Upon successful completion of the examination, the candidate may be approved for registration.

Motion: Nikki Coler

Seconded: Duane Hudson

MSC

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**McKenna M. Mathews**

McKenna M. Mathews has a B.A. degree in Biology from Augustana University-Sioux Falls SD and meets the one-year of supervised employment. McKenna is approved to take the examination. Upon successful completion of the examination, the candidate may be approved for registration.

Motion: Ray Starin  
Seconded: Nikki Coler  
MSC

**Marci J. VanHazinga**

Marci J. VanHazinga has a B.S. degree in Kinesiology from the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities and meets the one-year of supervised employment. Marci is approved to take the examination. Upon successful completion of the examination, the candidate may be approved for registration.

Motion: Neile Reider  
Seconded: Peggy Spadafore  
MSC

**Candidates Applying for Reciprocity**

**Isaiah J. Armendariz**

Isaiah J. Armendariz has a B.S. degree in Community Health Education from Minnesota State University-Mankato and meets the of the one-year supervised employment. The candidate is approved for registration.

Motion: Nikki Coler  
Seconded: Ray Starin  
MSC

**Ahmed H. Hashi**

Ahmed H. Hashi has a B.S. degree in Health Science from San Diego State University and meets the of the one-year supervised employment. The candidate is approved for registration.

Motion: Nikki Coler  
Seconded: Ray Starin  
MSC

## Old Business

- Linda Prail announced that Dan Huff, MDH, Assistant Commissioner reviewed our proposed rule language looking for ways to include equity within our rules. After Dan provided his recommendations, MDH staff then included Dan's equity recommendations into the proposed language. Linda went on to inform the Council that Cindy Weckwerth with the City of Minneapolis also provided very useful comments to our proposed rule language and that Cindy's comments were also included in our revisions.
- Linda informed the Council that after today's meeting the revised language would be sent out to the Council for their review and comments. If necessary, a special meeting with the Council would be arranged to discuss their comments further.
- Linda informed the Council that after all comments and revisions were complete, the revised version of the proposed rule language would be posted on MDH's website for public comment. Linda is hoping to move these rule revisions through the process as quickly as possible.
- Jim Topie then informed the Council that he is currently working on the Statement of Need and Reasonableness (SONAR) and with these latest revisions to the language, he will wait for all final revisions before continuing to finish the SONAR.
- Duane Hudson informed the Council that Hennepin County has developed a tool kit to assist in equity at the County. They are working on hiring staff more reflective of their community by developing trainee positions that provide an avenue to enter this career path.
- Ray Starin stated that the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is working on hiring a more diverse staff and offering language learning abilities. MDA has also created a HACCP Team that is looking for ways to approve different cultural foods that can bring these foods into the mainstream to serve the public.
- Neile Reider stated that the Department of Transportation (DOT) has an equity focus lens throughout the entire department. This would include such things as buildings with prayer rooms and quiet rooms, rest areas with adult changing tables and how any of their facilities interact with the public.
- Josh Skaar with the Minnesota Department of Health's Legal Unit stated his unit is creating initiatives that involve more people in the rulemaking process.
- Nikki Coler stated that she is glad to hear that everyone is sharing in the focus lens of equity.

## New Business

### REHS/RS Rule Language and Health Equity

Dan Huff

- Dan Huff, MDH, Assistant Commissioner joined the meeting at 10:00 am. Dan informed the Council that he was asked by his Team how to add equity within the REHS/RS rules. Dan then asked if a 4-year degree was necessary and how much science is necessary to perform this job and pass the exam? He went onto say that when we look at college requirements, they favor people like us, and we end up with a less diverse job force. Dan further stated that it is a Sanitarian's job to advise, educate and provide technical assistance to the public.
- Dan informed the Council that to add equity to these rules, MDH has rewritten the rules to include three tracks. These 3 tracks include:
  1. A 4-year degree along with 1 year work experience and pass the exam.
  2. An associates degree along with 5 years work experience and pass then exam.
  3. Reciprocity.
- The Advisory Council Members then asked some questions and added some comments:
  - There are other ways to address this issue, such as a trainee program.
  - Create a reimbursement program for schooling.
  - Will there be a wage tier classification set-up for those with a 2-year degree verses those with a 4- year degree?
    - Dan stated that the pay would be equivalent.
  - How would this work with the delegation agreements?
    - Angie stated that internal discussions were happening, and that the delegation agreement language would change.
  - How successful was track 2 in other states?
    - Jim stated that after his research only 1 person was hired in Wisconsin utilizing a track similar to track 2.
- Dan thanked everyone for their service on the Council.

## Other Issues

No additional items at this time.

## Next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for June 6, 2023, from 9:00 am – 11:00 am and will be held remotely.

A motion was made to adjourn.

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Motion: Duane Hudson  
Seconded: Neile Reider  
MSC

Minnesota Department of Health  
EH-FPLS  
651-201-4500  
[www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us)

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